The Usage of Switzerland's Imperforate *Sitting Helvetia* Issue of 1854 - 1863

Introduction

Stamps became obligatory for prepayment of both domestic and international postage on October 11, 1854. Anticipating this need, the Swiss Post Office Department contracted for printing of the imperforate *Sitting Helvetia* in March of 1852. The first stamps were printed in Bavaria on locally made paper. The first use of Swiss-made paper was in 1856. Slow production methods and constantly rising demand for stamps led to many printings, stopgap use of earlier rejected printings on thin paper, and replacement of a hand press with a faster machine press.

The Challenge

The difficulty of unearthing production details, release dates, and establishing earliest known uses as an alternative to release dates has made this issue a difficult one to catalog and show in exhibit form. This exhibitor' s research is resulting in major revisions to catalogs, but the exhibit follows the *Zumstein 2000 Specialized Catalog of Switzerland* listing 31 basic stamps because it is the current generally accepted standard. All issues are featured in this exhibit. New research is highlighted throughout.

Because the exhibit is focused on usages and order of release, used stamps and use of covers are featured. One should not make the mistake that the lack of mint stamps makes this an easy exhibit to assemble. **In fact, it is the finest exhibit of this issue assembled to date containing both unrivaled rarity and quality.**

Organization and Presentation

By virtue of the way the stamps were issued with embedded silk threads of various colors, using the classification of the *Zumstein Specialkatalog* of each issue, i.e., Aa, A, B, etc., the exhibit is divided into three parts.

1st Period 1854 – 1855 **Munich Printing** (Aa, A, B.) *green threads.*
2nd Period 1855 – 1857 **Bern Printing** (C, D, E) *different colored threads*
3rd Period 1857 – 1863 **Bern Printing** (F, G) *green threads.*

The number of pages devoted to each printing reflects the variations in the number of denominations, number of color varieties, and length of use. These items are shown by issue, by cover, and by other varieties on & off cover showing normal and unusual rates.

Frames/Page	# of Pages	Catalog Identity	Paper	Printing
1/2 - 2/16	15	Aa (4)	Munich	Munich
2/1 - 3/5	21	A (4)	Munich	Munich
3/6 - 4/8	19	B (4)	Munich	Bern
4/9 - 6/4	28	C (4)	Munich/Zurich	Bern
6/6 - 7/5	17	D (3) +1	Munich/Zurich	Bern
7/6 - 7/11	5	E (2)	Munich	Bern
7/12 - 8/12	16	F (4)	Munich	Bern
8/13 - 10/16	38	G (6)	Zurich	Bern

Highlights are shown on red matting.